

Mr. Miguel del Valle  
Commissioner  
Illinois Commerce Commission  
527 East Capitol Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62701

RE: Case 12-0598/Mt. Zion to Kansas Segment/Support for the ICC-proposed  
PDM/CFT/Staff Route

Dear Commissioner del Valle,

Thank you for your service to the people of Illinois. As you know:

- The Commission took the appropriate action in granting a rehearing for the Mt. Zion to Kansas segment of the Illinois Rivers Project.
- The ICC Staff took the appropriate action in moving the Mt. Zion substation further south and east and placing it on Ameren's original/primary route.
- Ameren took the appropriate action when they formally accepted the ICC Staff's new substation location.
- And after carefully reviewing months of testimony, evidence, and filed briefs, Administrative Law Judges Albers and Yoder took the appropriate action in their Proposed Second Order on Rehearing when they selected the PDM/CFT/Staff route (which is comprised of a hybrid of Ameren's original, carefully studied, and properly vetted routes) as the "preferable" and "least cost" option for the Mt. Zion to Kansas segment of the Illinois Rivers Project.

Now, on the eve of your Bench Session on February 20, I and hundreds of others are asking you and your fellow ICC Commissioners to take the appropriate action and support the Administrative Law Judges' Proposed Second Order on Rehearing and their proper selection of the PDM/CFT/Staff route for use in the Mt. Zion to Kansas segment.

As the evidence clearly shows, the PDM/CFT/Staff route outperforms the MCPO route on all of the known factors in this case, thereby making the PDM/CFT/Staff route "the least cost" option in this rehearing. In keeping with the ICC's charter, the ICC Commissioners should support the Administrative Law Judges' Proposed Second Order on Rehearing and their proper selection of the PDM/CFT/Staff route, which lies directly between substations in Mt. Zion and Kansas, and reject the longer, more costly, and far more destructive MCPO route through Douglas and Piatt Counties--two counties that **were not even included** in Ameren's formal petition for this project.

Regarding your decision, please see the attached map and the evidence below, which clearly support the ALJs' Proposed Second Order and the use of the PDM/CFT/Staff route.

- The MCPO route would be over 9 miles longer, would cost over \$17 million more to construct, and would include 50 more towers and spans than the PDM/CFT/Staff route, thereby increasing maintenance costs, environmental and visual impacts, damage to property, and reliability issues due to weather-related incidents.
- The MCPO route would SPLIT 103 family farms (4x the PDM/CFT/Staff route!) by running these massive towers right through the middle of farm after farm for over 70 miles. In contrast, the PDM/CFT/Staff route reflects public input by following roads, section lines, and property lines.
- The MCPO route would place these massive towers and 345,000-volt transmission lines unnecessarily close to several towns (*within 1,500 feet* in multiple cases), including Mt. Zion, LaPlace, Hammond, Pierson Station, Atwood, Tuscola, Camargo, Newman, and Oakland--thereby negatively impacting community aesthetics, property values for hundreds of residents, and future growth and development for all of these communities.
- The MCPO route would include SIX 90° zigzagging turns in just over 2 miles while crossing over US 36 and the Arthur Road into the historic Amish Community just north of Arthur, Illinois. Running these massive high-voltage towers through the Amish Community would be devastating to this unique, historic area and would forever destroy the area's beautiful, rural sight lines, which annually draw visitors from around the globe.
- In the rehearing portion of this case, over 500 individuals representing communities across the 70+ mile MCPO route have formally expressed and recorded their opposition to the MCPO route by becoming formal Intervenor in this ICC process. Those 500+ Intervenor supporting the PDM/CFT/Staff route represent **over 10 times** the number of people who are supporting the MCPO route.
- To date, the ICC's Public Comment site for the Illinois Rivers Project has received 427 comments. **Over 220 of those comments voice opposition to the MCPO route through Piatt and Douglas Counties** and state support for the PDM/CFT/Staff route. That equates to well over half of the total comments submitted for the entire 380-mile Illinois Rivers Project, and many of those comments were submitted by elected officials (i.e., mayors, township supervisors, village trustees, county board members, etc.) representing the counties, townships, and communities along the 70-mile MCPO-proposed route. In short, the communities along the MCPO route have spoken!
- The MCPO route, with its massive towers, would not only run directly across the historic Amish community but also right through a registered Native American archaeological site and right next to the widely used Tuscola airport, needlessly increasing the danger to local pilots and over 91 University of Illinois Flight School students.
- The MCPO route would require the clearing of forestland along the Lake Fork, Kaskaskia, and Embarras Rivers, and it would cross more wetland areas and 19 more streams than the PDM/CFT/Staff route, causing far more damage to the ecosystem.

- As a final piece of evidence pointing to how far off course the MCPO route would travel, Ameren (the petitioner in this case) **never developed or proposed ANY routes through Piatt or Douglas Counties**, and Douglas and Piatt Counties (to this day) are **not even included** in Ameren's formal petition to the ICC for this project.

Again, thank you for your time and for maintaining the public trust by taking the appropriate action in this case and supporting the Administrative Law Judges' Second Proposed Order on Rehearing and their proper selection of the PDM/CFT/Staff route for the Mt. Zion to Kansas portion of the Illinois Rivers Project.

With kind regards and sincere appreciation,

Erik Hammerstrom  
Douglas County property owner